

# *Sketch*

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## The Last Crumb

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The line is drawn across your face—  
The line where shore meets water,  
And you stand and gaze upon the black water.

And you Okies, Dusties, men of misfortune,  
You go west and south and north and east.  
Sons of misfortune, you breed misfortune.  
The landed men hear your cry.  
You settle like flies on their neat, white tables.  
You are as dry and as arid as your acres.  
You are brittle and cracked.  
You would drink, now that you have reached the sands,  
But you too stand and gaze upon the water.

What have you done, men?  
What blackness is in your souls?  
What brings you to the water?  
Staring thirstily, with cracked and bleeding lips,  
Gazing with dry and puffy tongues,  
You stand and gaze upon the water.

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## The Last Crumb

*Edward C. Easton*

Sci. Sr.

**B**Y THE feeble glow of a half-burned-out flashlight Old Carl carefully searched the empty coal shed. Sweeping the dry floor with a broom, he collected a small pile of dust, scooped it into the battered coal pail, and returned with it to his shack.

The night was cold and silent. Not even the slightest breeze whispered in the towering tamaracks. A tiny feather of smoke rising perpendicularly from the chimney shone white against the star-specked sky. With his little pile of dust, Old Carl entered the shack, shoving the old rag carpet tight against the door sill as he closed the door.

A few small embers still glowed in the warped old laundry stove, and when he scattered the dust over them a tiny flame burst out where each coal had been. Old Carl watched the few tiny flames burn bravely and then give way to smouldering, heatless embers. Breaking the old broom over his knee, he fed

it bit by bit into the stove. It burned brightly, and the flames, showing thru the cracks in the warped old stove top, lit up the walls of the shack and caused little animated spots of light to dance across the face of the picture of Washington on the wall. The granite coffee pot astraddle the big crack in the stove top, simmered whisperingly, promisingly, before the flames died out. Lifting the pot from the stove, the old man drank from the spout. It was only luke-warm, but it was coffee, and it cheered him half-way down.

Finally the last splinter of the old broom was burned. Habitually, the old man returned to the coal shed. He knew it was empty, but he had to be sure. He searched the floor again. His gnarled, old fingers ached where the joints were bulged, and the spot where the bull had gored his back felt hot, but not warmly so. He spit loudly in defiance of the cold. There just wasn't any coal left.

**A**LMOST back to the shack he stepped on something hard, and his ankle turned. When he had struggled to his feet he turned the feeble glow of the flashlight down the path. He couldn't believe it. It was a small lump of coal. It was no bigger than a walnut, but it was round and hard, and it was coal.

Returning to the shack and the stove he dropped the lump among the embers. "That's the last of the coal," he said, addressing the stove. "That's all of it. It's the last crumb. When it's gone the fire will be out, and the ashes will get cold."

He thrust his hands into the bowl of the stove and rubbed the aching knuckles over the tiny flame. The flame went out.

"Well," he said aloud, as he returned the lids to the stove top, "I didn't waste any of it. Guess I'll have to light the oil heater the kids gave me for Christmas."



## Seascapes

*Myrtle Marie Campbell*

H. Ec. Sr.

**M**Y BLUE chambray dress fluttered back in the wind as I ran down the weedy path that curved around the cliff, across the black rocks, over the shining little pools, to the soft sand. Beneath me the sand was warm; I pressed my hands into